

## Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee Meeting

November 29, 2007

Members present: Harry Beyer, Gerry Boyle, Elissa Brown, Jim Coutre, Ken Miller, Barbara Pike, Jim Terry, Andrea Siani

Others present: Dinny McIntyre, Marcia Rasmussen and a number of citizens

Recorder: Barbara Pike

### Material Hand Outs:

Cover letter and 2 enclosures from "Citizens' Analysis of Comments, Questions, and Answers at Community Outreach Meetings" - prepared by Michael Beers, Jim Coutre, and Dick Waters. One copy of the draft report was also presented.

"BFRT Personal Stories", a compilation of 25 communications from Concord residents about their personal needs with respect to the Concord section of the BFRT - prepared by Judy LaRocca and Jill Appel

1. Minutes from the October 18 were accepted as revised
2. JimT reported that the Board of Selectmen discussed wording of a warrant article pertaining to the spring Town Meeting approval of the 25% preliminary design prior to submitting it to MassHwy. The warrant closes on January 2. The Advisory Committee will discuss this further at a future meeting.
3. Ken reported on a meeting that he and Andrea had with the White Pond Advisory Committee. Matters discussed included a people-management plan, budget for implementing it, identifying ponds similar to White Pond that are also near a rail trail. The WPAC expressed concerns about using volunteer rangers because they would not be able to have enforcement power. Questions raised by WPAC were whether the underpass at Powder Mill Road would be closed off until the section of the trail is built from Powder Mill road to the Sudbury town line and whether the 25% preliminary design includes the section from Powder Mill Road to the Sudbury town line.
4. The committee report for the annual Town Report is due January 2. Elissa volunteered to prepare a draft.
5. Marcia Rasmussen met with Town staff engineering and safety officials concerning the at-grade crossing of the rail trail at the MBTA commuter line near the depot in West Concord. Two alternatives were discussed: a direct crossing at the location currently used by commuters and a diversion to the rail spur that leads to Commonwealth Avenue. The Town officials preferred using the existing crossing and adding safety gates. They felt that trail users might cross there anyway, that Commonwealth Avenue was narrow, and that it would be undesirable to eliminate parking spaces.  
The committee will discuss the alternatives and initiate further discussions with the MBTA about the crossing.
6. Elissa presented a summary of information about stabilized soils from the sub-committee meeting with Judy LaRocca and Jill Appel. She noted that the National Center on Accessibility has developed standard measures of accessibility for various stabilized soils and soils without stabilizers. Their study indicates that some binders are more accessible than others, and that some wear better than others over time. Advantages of stabilized soils include: they are more firm and stable than unstabilized soils and may have a more natural look than asphalt-type surfaces. Disadvantages include: they exclude users who require small wheels, including some mobility-

impaired persons, long-term durability has not been established, and maintenance technology and equipment required is not well known. The initial costs of stabilized soils and asphalt are similar. Unstabilized stone dust would have lower construction costs, but require more frequent maintenance. MassHwy may consider approving stabilized soils.

Jim Coutre noted that stone dust is ADA-compliant.

7. Jim Terry reported on Marcia's conversation with MassHwy (at the Oct. 24 BFRT Phase 2 & 3 Coordinating Committee meeting) at which MassHwy's opinion was that they would not fund a stone dust trail and having Concord use a stone dust surface in the White Pond area could impact Sudbury's request for MassHwy funding.

There was further discussion about MassHwy policy concerning funding a replacement asphalt surface and whether their policy has changed regarding funding a stone dust surface.

Jim Terry said Mass Hwy District 4 would like for Concord to begin active discussions with them and to come to them with the Town's ideas of what it is interested in. A committee member requested that MassHwy be asked if it has funded any stone dust trails and, if so, under what conditions.

8. Ken said that he felt a non-asphalt surface would be better for "rural areas" for the following reasons: aesthetics (more context-sensitive), excludes some users such as in-line skaters and road bikers, would allow for X-C skiing in the winter. He said that the rail bed is very firm and that the Wachusett Greenway volunteers do repairs to that trail.

9. JimC discussed the material previously described in the "handouts" concerning a summary of citizen comments from the Community Outreach Meetings.

10. Andrea expressed concerns about the process of submitting the 25% design to MassHwy. She felt that the committee should have been told about the Oct. 24 meeting of representatives from BFRT Phases 2&3 with MassHwy and that the information from the meeting should have been presented to the committee in a more timely way.

11. Barbara explained that the BFRT Coordinating Committee meeting scheduled by MassHwy on October 24 was the initial meeting with Lawrence Cash, the MassHwy project engineer in charge of BFRT. Each of the six towns was invited to send participants. In addition there were non-participating observers from citizen groups.

12. Dinny McIntyre said that she regrets the committee was not fully involved in the Oct. 24 meeting and feels that there should be an opportunity for all committee members to attend future meetings of the coordinating committee. With reference to the completion of the 25% design RFP, she explained that such documents are usually written by Town staff and that it was her decision to issue it.

Ken and Harry asked for further clarification from MassHwy about what kinds of surfaces they would fund.

13. Elissa reported on her discussion with both the Natural Resources Administrator and Concord Public Works about the selection of surface materials. The NRC is beginning to think about surface types, but will probably not make a final determination until a Notice of Intent has been filed. CPW will maintain whatever surface is used, as long as they have sufficient budget. They do not currently know how to maintain stabilized soil, and the Town does not currently own the equipment necessary to maintain a stone dust surface along the length of the trail.

14. Future meeting of the committee will be held on December 6 and 13 at 7:30 am in the Selectmen's Room.

Citizen Comments:

Judith Sprott: comment that she would like for the Town of Concord to talk with MassHwy about their criteria for extending invitations to observers to the BFRT Coordinating Committee meetings  
comment about funding sources other than MassHwy or the Town

Bill Gluck: comment that he was disappointed that citizens, rather than the committee, had to produce the summary of the outreach meetings. comment about trail safety and trail crossing of the commuter rail line

Sylvia Cullington: asked that consideration be given to those who need or prefer a softer surface for walking or jogging

Susan Birge: suggested that information from MassHwy be "official" expressed concern that information from the MassHwy Coordinating Committee meeting was not presented at the Special Town Meeting (held on November 5)

Steve Ippolito: comment that he has used Minuteman Bike Path, which has a mix of users, with no problems comment that Concord already has many dirt walking paths but no trail that others can use

Jill Appel: suggested that the AC use the matrix prepared by VHB on various aspects of various surface materials in order to have a rational basis for decisions. presented collection of BFRT personal stories

Josh Galper: suggested that the AC use an outside mediator

Judy LaRocca: comment that children would have difficulty using their rolling backpacks or roller skating to school on a trail with a soft surface

Jane Coutre: comment on MassHwy "community first" principle  
comment about abutters and current users

Mary Keating: comment that she prefers walking on a soft surface  
comment about rushing decisions about the trail design

Julie Melbin: comment that she has seen kids using skate boards on grass